ARRL Message **Precedences**

All messages handled by Amateur Radio should contain precedences -- that is, an evaluation of each message's importance, made by the originating station. A precedence pertains to the "order of handling." There are four precedences in the ARRL message form: **Emergency, Priority (P), Welfare (W) and Routine (R),** in that order of handling. When they appear on a net or any other kind of circuit, messages will be handled in this order.

1 Emergency

Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief to stricken populace in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be very rare. On Voice, CW, RTTY, AMTOR, packet, and other digital modes this designation will always be spelled out. When in doubt, do not use this designation.

The generally accepted definition of Emergency Communications occurs when impending or actual conditions are jeopardizing public health and safety; i.e., when there is an immediate or direct threat to life, health, and/or property.

2 Priority

Use abbreviation P on CW, RTTY, AMTOR, packet, and other digital modes. On voice, simply voice as PRIORITY. This classification is for important messages having a specific time limit, official messages not covered in the emergency category, press dispatches and emergency-related traffic not of the utmost urgency.

Note: Although EMERGENCY is well-defined the line between Emergency and Priority depends on the degree of urgency; which is not always black and white. Err on the side of emergency when in a life-threatening situation.

"The difference between emergency and urgency are set by the government and the agencies which plan them and manage them. The emergency for medical professionals, for pilots, for natural disaster management agencies are different and compiled in their rule books.

The main difference between emergency and urgency is that in emergency there is i**mmediate** threat to life, health, property or environment; whereas in urgency, there is no immediate danger or threat to life, health, property or environment; but if not taken care in a given period of time, then the situation may turn into an emergency situation."

Medical triage has specific tags for specific injurious conditions (red and yellow being the most cogent regarding precedence. Green, White, and Black tags can be generally ignored.

Red tags - (immediate) are used to label those who cannot survive without immediate treatment but who have a chance of survival. (Use **EMERGENCY** designation)

Yellow tags - (observation) for those who require observation (and possible later re-triage). Their condition is stable for the moment and, they are not in immediate danger of death. These victims will still need hospital care and would be treated immediately under normal circumstances. Requires evaluation after the Red Tag communications are serviced whether **Priority or EMERGENCY**?.

Green tags - (wait) are reserved for the "walking wounded" who will need medical care at some point, after more critical injuries have been treated. Use **PRIORIT**Y designator.

White tags - (dismiss) are given to those with minor injuries for whom a doctor's care is not required.

Black tags - (expectant) are used for the deceased and for those whose injuries are so extensive that they will not be able to survive given the care that is available. (Dismiss)

3 **Welfare**

This classification, abbreviated as W on CW, RTTY, AMTOR and packet, refers to either an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area or an advisory from the disaster area that indicates all is well. Welfare traffic is handled only after all emergency and priority traffic is cleared. The Red Cross equivalent to an incoming Welfare message is DWI (Disaster Welfare Inquiry).

4 **Routine**

Most traffic in normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled Routine (R on CW, RTTY, AMTOR and packet) should be handled last, or not at all when circuits are busy with higher-precedence traffic.

The precedence will follow the message number in the header; but is not a part of the message number.

For example, a message may begin on CW with
NR 207 R W1AW ck 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2
On Voice: "Number Two Zero Seven, Routine W1AW check 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2""
Both are written the same as 207 R W1AW 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2

"NR 208 **P** W1AW ck 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2 (on CW)
"On Voice: "Number two zero eight **Priority** W1AW check 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2
Both are written as 208 P W1AW 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2

Always write out in full "EMERGENCY" for emergency traffic.

"NR 208 EMERGENCY W1AW ck 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2 (CW)
On Voice: "Number two zero eight **EMERGENCY** W1AW check 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan 2"
Both are written as 208 **EMERGENCY** W1AW 15 Newington Red Cross HQ, CT 0802 Jan

2

(Precedences Rev. 04-06-2023 -- ni6a)